

DELIUS SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER



NEWSLETTER  
of the  
DELIUS SOCIETY

President: Eric Fenby, O.B.E.  
Hon. Treasurer: G. H. Parfitt.  
Editor: John White.

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No. 36.

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## EDITORIAL

I am sure the entire membership will wish to join me in congratulating our President on his election to the Honorary Committee of Management of the Royal Philharmonic Society. This is a considerable honour which could not have been better merited and I do not doubt that the news will be received with the greatest pleasure and satisfaction by us all.

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That there has been no Summer edition of the Newsletter is entirely due to the dilatoriness of the Editor and not to any lack of material; the full quota of Newsletters should, however, appear during the forthcoming year. Meanwhile, I should like to thank all those who have supplied me with information, articles and cuttings, and who have to wait such an inordinate time to receive a written acknowledgement of my gratefulness for their contributions. We are all deeply indebted to them for their dedication to the Delius cause and without their help I should have no Newsletter to edit.

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The resignation of our Secretary, Miss Estelle Palmley, both from the secretaryship and from the committee, on the 6th July, is a severe blow to the Society, although not a surprise to those of us who have known of the strain under which she has been working in recent years. During the past twelve months especially, she has been far from well, and her private burdens are such that it was inevitable that eventually it would be impossible for her to continue in office. The members of this Society owe an immense debt to her for her untiring devotion to its work and for the unstinting time and energy she devoted to her correspondence and indeed to every aspect of the Society's activities. We wish her a well earned rest from all these labours and at least some leisure in which to listen to performances of her favourite composer in quiet and tranquility.

Secretarial work will be shared amongst the remaining members of the Committee for the time being and will do what it can to maintain the standard set by Estelle in the past.

\* \* \* \* \*

Dr. Roland Gibson has asked me to express his heartfelt thanks to Charles Barnard for having put on such a delightful out of town Dinner. With characteristic modesty he requested me to add: "although I made a little speech about my preliminary activities in 1961 as founder member, that is now well in the past ..... the real founders are the members of the Committee, a Committee blessed with a superb Secretary".

The tribute to Miss Palmley will be endorsed by us all. I cannot speak for the remainder of the Committee but would say that the early days of the Society hold a very special place amongst my memories and that I shall never cease to be grateful to Roland for bringing the Society into being and for seeing it through its initial and most crucial stages.

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I have received a letter from Miss Eleanor Inglefield, who informs me that she is a niece of Delius, and in which she says that, when visiting the opening of the Newlyn Art Gallery, she was interested to see "a very lovely picture entitled 'Delius's Irmelin'." She continues: "I feel that members who might be on holiday in the Penzance area would be interested to go and see it. The artist is Miss Ithell Colquhoun of Mousehole." If any of our members know of the picture, or should see it in the future, perhaps they would write to me with their impressions and comments.

\* \* \* \* \*

I should mention an error in Newsletter 34, page 15. The recording dates 'August 6th-8th, 1969' against 'EMI Studio No.1, Abbey Road, London (In a Summer Garden, etc)' should have read 'August 6th-8th, 1968'. I apologise for not spotting this typographical error before the Newsletter went to print.

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Mr. John Bishop, the Newsletter Editor of the Peter Warlock Society has sent me a copy of the Society's new brochure, a handsome and informative booklet of twelve pages. Particulars are included of books, recordings and published music and anyone interested should write to Mr. Bishop, who is also a member of the Delius Society, and whose address is 14, Barlby Road, London, W.10 GAR.

There is neither room nor need for comment here on the relationship between Philip Heseltine and Delius: Sir Thomas Beecham's remarks in his book on Delius have always seemed to me to show that he disliked Heseltine anyway and was therefore incapable of giving a just assessment. That there was indebtedness on both sides seems clear and Heseltine's book on Delius and his many fine arrangements and vocal and piano scores of the choral works and concertos are of permanent value and an essential part of the Delius heritage.

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Contributions to the Newsletter, and any correspondence in connection with its contents, should be sent to the Editor, 19 Maple Avenue, Maidstone, Kent.

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Postscript - I have received a letter from Miss Ithell Colquhoun informing me that the painting: 'Delius' Irmelin' will be on exhibition as part of a 'one man' show consisting of paintings, collages and drawings, at Exeter Museum and Art Gallery, Queen Street, Exeter, from September 26th to October 21st. Miss Colquhoun has had her works exhibited widely in Britain and on the Continent.

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### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- Saturday 21st October (Time and venue to be arranged)  
Julian Lloyd Webber (cello) and John Forster (piano)  
Programme to include the Delius Cello Sonata and Bliss's Cello Concerto plus some cello and piano pieces by Faure.
- Monday, 23rd October  
Wigmore Hall (time not given)  
Recital by Ruth Allsebrook (Soprano) with Murray Brown (piano) which will include five songs by Delius:-  
Tickets are £1.00, 80p, 50p and 30p.  
"The Bird's Tale", "Twilight Fancies", "Sweet Venevil", "The Nightingale" and "To the Queen of my Heart".  
(In sending me this information, Mr. Giles Easterbrook comments that Miss Allsebrook "has great sympathy for these songs, and sings them beautifully").
- Thursday, 23rd November, at 7.30 p.m.  
Holborn Library. Talk by Dr. Lionel Carley - "An American Journey" being an illustrated account of a research and lecture trip undertaken on behalf of the Delius Trust earlier this year.
- Thursday, 11th January 1973 at 7.30 p.m.  
Holborn Library. Illustrated talk by Lyndon Jenkins - "Some observations on recorded Delius".
- Tuesday, 23rd January, 1973  
(Time and venue to be arranged).  
Presentation of the new recording "A Village Romeo and Juliet" by Meredith Davies (conductor) and Christopher Bishop (recording producer). This is to be undertaken in association with EMI Records and will be open to the general public.
- Wednesday, 24th January, 1973  
Carlisle Market Hall at 7.30 p.m.
- Thursday, 25th January, 1973  
Newcastle City Hall at 7.45 p.m.
- Friday, 26th January, 1973  
London Queen Elizabeth Hall at 7.45 p.m.  
Northern Sinfonia Orchestra conducted by Christopher Seaman with Pierre Fournier ('cello) and Hazel Holt (soprano). This concert includes the following works:-  
Vivaldi: Concerto in G minor for the Dresden Orchestra.

Delius: Four old English love lyrics:  
           Spring the sweet spring;  
           So white, so soft, so sweet is she;  
           Fair daffodils;  
           It was a lover and his lass.  
 Schumann: Concerto in A minor for cello and  
           orchestra.  
 Schoenberg: Verklarte Nacht.

A note in the advertisement states: "An interesting extra attraction in this programme is a group of songs by Delius which have been orchestrated by Layton Ring.

Mr. G. Layton Ring of Northumberland is a member of our Society.

Friday, 23rd  
 February, 1973

1, The Boltons, S.W.10 at 7.30 p.m.  
 An evening of piano roll recordings of Percy Grainger playing works by Delius. Limited accomodation (50 persons) and entry by ticket only.

Wednesday, 21st  
 March, 1973

Holborn Library at 7.30 p.m.  
 Piano recital by Robert Threlfall - "Delius and his friends".

BARBIROLI'S LAST RECORDING by Lyndon Jenkins.

A coincidence tinged with melancholy for Delians that our erstwhile Vice-President's last recorded performance should be of music by Delius. No more than a coincidence though because in recent years Sir John Barbirolli seemed to have begun to record this music in earnest; and, with two all-Delius discs already completed and other pieces on a mixed disc, who knows what might have followed had he lived?

During the interval of his Society talk on Barbirolli last January, Malcolm Walker and I noted three interesting things: one, that Sir John recorded hardly any major Delius while Sir Thomas Beecham was alive; what he did do - the Idyll and 'A Song of Summer' - Beecham didn't touch; two, that even after the latter's death it was a long time before Barbirolli's Delius began to appear - as if the ghost of everyone's greatest rival in this music had taken a long time to lay; thirdly, a great paradox - why did Barbirolli, whose relations with Beecham were scarcely ever less than strained, use Beecham's edited score for his recording of 'Appalachia'?

Even if the record sleeve had not carried the words "Edited and Revised Beecham" there can be no doubt that it is the version that Beecham prepared and the Delius Trust published which is used here; every other bar proclaims it. Of course Barbirolli by no means sticks slavishly to Beecham's idea of how the piece should be done; one would hardly expect that from a complete professional like Sir John. So the question which interested me while writing this review has been: is the end product any nearer the standard of the Beecham performances than other post-Beecham discs have been? Personally, I think the answer is yes.

This performance is most notably full of lovely details of phrasing; there is considerable presence in the more atmospheric sections, the playing is of a high standard throughout, the chorus excellent, the recording generally good. Of course there are things one can criticise: the opening paragraphs seem to sprawl and lack a sense of direction; some of the playing is very prosaic indeed, e.g. the last variation on side one; and in some of the 6/8 sections the rhythm occasionally begins to plod; the baritone soloist is allowed to adopt an unsuitable hectoring tone which I for one find unpleasant. But these are relatively minor faults. On the technical side, though the tone of the brass is generally magnificent, the horns are backwardly placed and do not tell nearly as much as they should; indeed the whole thing is rather quietly recorded, and a little lacking in bass (although the double-basses themselves are remarkably clear) but the overall impression is of well-cushioned sound with much separate detail that comes over clearly.

The performance of 'Brigg Fair' which completes the disc is, I believe, only a partial success. It begins well enough but much that follows fails to maintain the earlier promise. The rhythm of the opening variations is well sustained but the dreamy nocturne does not make its full effect; the subsequent more robust passages sound well enough but a highly idiosyncratic tempo is adopted for the solemn chorale-like tune in brass and strings with



which many will be unhappy. Only an average performance then - and more's the pity since, as many people feel that the last Beecham recording of 'Brigg Fair' is not a complete success, we could do with a really first-rate stereo version. But where will it come from?

I have heard pleas before for conductors to "use the Beecham scores" to play Delius. Well no conductor wishes his performances to be mere copies, quite apart from the fact that the Beecham scores needed Beecham to really bring them off; to use his scores even to the letter is by no means automatic guarantee of a Beecham performance - would it were that easy! But the very success of the recording of 'Appalachia' seems to me powerful advocacy for the remaining Maestri to follow Sir John's example. If he could do it, why not they?

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#### MIDLANDS BRANCH REPORT.

On the 3rd December, 1971 Lyndon Jenkins presented a most interesting selection of historical Delius records. The programme was as follows:-

Beecham and the Old R.P.O.

On hearing the first cuckoo in Spring (1927) - this recording was in Delius' own collection.

Violin Sonata No. 1 (1929) played by May Harrison and Arnold Bax - Lyndon said this is the only recording of Bax on the piano.

Cello Sonata (1926) played by Beatrice Harrison and Harold Craxton.

Intermezzo from Fennimore and Gerda (1936) - Beecham from Volume 2 of the Delius Society.

In a Summer Garden played by the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Geoffrey Toye - This record was in Delius' collection and Mr. Fenby recounts in "Delius as I knew him" that it was the last music he heard.

Serenade from Hassan - Lionel Tertis (Viola) and George Reeves.  
Song before Sunrise (1949) Beecham and the Royal Philharmonic  
(an American record)

Twilight Fancies (1947) Elsie Suddaby and the R.P.O. conducted by Beecham.

To the Queen of my heart     )     (1934) Heddle Nash and Gerald Moore from  
Love's Philosophy             )     Volume 1 of the Delius Society.

Violin Concerto - Albert Sammons, with Liverpool Philharmonic conducted by  
Sargent.

It should be explained that, in the case of the longer works, extracts only were played. It was fascinating to hear the works played by the original performers and we hope Lyndon will offer us another selection from his archives at a future date.

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On the Monday following a visit by four branch members to the Annual General Meeting and "Koanga" we had the final meeting of the season at the Trotman abode.

This was a Peter Warlock Merry-go-down consisting of letters, extracts from Cecil Gray's biography of the composer and an excerpt from D.H. Lawrence's "Women in Love" cruelly caricaturing Warlock; the readings gave all those present an opportunity of participating, and, between these, there were musical interludes consisting in the main of songs sung by Clive Bemrose (a member of the Warlock Society) and Margaret Trotman. Jerry Rowe and Dick Kitching also played extracts from the Capriol Suite in piano duet undeterred by comments such as "Oh, not that again!"

Delius figured quite prominently, the musical items including "On Craig Ddu" which was the 16 year-old Heseltine's introduction to Delius. There were also extracts from the correspondence between Delius and Heseltine including two concerning an enquiry by Heseltine whether Delius thought Lawrence could go to live at Solana Grove; Delius quashed this, suggesting that California would suit Lawrence much better.

The evening ended in a somewhat ribald manner with Clive Bemrose singing "Peter Warlock's Fancy" with the audience joining in the chorus.

R.B.K.

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# THE 1972 DELIUS FESTIVAL OF JACKSONVILLE.

January 23rd - February 4th, 1972, Jacksonville, Florida.

Members will undoubtedly be interested in the following extracts from the Festival brochure, especially in view of Dr. Carley's talk to the Society to be given on November 23rd. The brochure begins, appropriately, with a tribute to the late Hugh Alderman:-

"The 1972 Delius Festival is dedicated to the memory of the late Mr. Hugh Alderman whose devotion to the music of Frederick Delius knew no bounds. Mr. Alderman, a founder member and former President of the Delius Association of Florida, gave unsparingly of himself in his leadership of that organisation, and his unceasing dedication to the cause of Delius' music shall forever serve as a beacon of inspiration to others."

The 1972 Delius Composition Awards included Performance Awards to Society members, Mr. A.J. Noakes and Mr. Crafton Harris, to whom we offer sincere congratulations:-

## PRIZE:

Haiku - A Song Cycle for Soprano, Viola and Harpsichord, by Marilyn J. Ziffrin, Bradford, New Hampshire.

## HONORABLE MENTION:

Continuum for Orchestra (by Special Agent .007), by Gregory Kosteck, Greenville, North Carolina.

Three Symphonic Sketches in the Spanish Style for Full Orchestra, by Dr. Leopold C. Bergerac, Newton Centre, Massachusetts.

Progression (1971) for Orchestra, by Maurice Wright, Durham, North Carolina.

Three Games for Woodwind Quintet, by William L. Hooper, New Orleans, Louisiana.

Etudes for Brass Quintet, by Dr. James Riley, Wichita, Kansas.

## PERFORMANCE AWARDS:

Icon: Igor Stravinsky for Orchestra, by Geoffrey Gibbs, Kingston, Rhode Island.

Signs of the Times for Male Chorus, Piano and Percussion, by Jerry Skelley, Bowling Green, Ohio.

"The Spirit of Air" and "Alone" from APRIL MOON - Song Cycle set to Seven Poems of Walter de la Mare for Medium Voice and Piano, by Crafton Harris, London, England.

"Comrades" from THREE SONGS 1970-71 for Medium Voice and Piano, by A. J. Noakes, Edgeware, Middlesex, England.

Elegy for Sister Kilian for Piano, by Gerald S. Gelatt, Middletown, Pennsylvania.

## SPECIAL MENTION:

Dedication for Bass Vocal Solo with Organ, by Wallace DePue, Bowling Green, Ohio.

Spirit Songs (1."In the Beginning", 2."And Ye Shall Be Filled") for SATB Chorus with Brass Quintet and Flute Trio, by John W. Worst, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Three Arabesques for Flute and Piano, by Alvin Epstein, Dallas, Texas.

## SPECIAL EVENTS

- Saturday, January 22 3.00 p.m.  
Haydon Burns Public Library Auditorium  
"The Yearling", feature film based on Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' novel.  
Largely filmed in Florida, "The Yearling" incorporates in its background  
score selections from the music of Delius. This film is being  
presented through the courtesy of Mr. Jack Strouss of Films, Inc.,  
Atlanta, Georgia
- Sunday, January 23 8.00 p.m.  
Recorded concert of Delius Music, Dr. Ralph Andrews program  
commentator. (Radio)
- Wednesday, January 26 8.00 p.m.  
Recorded concert of Delius music, Dr. Ralph Andrews program  
commentator. (Radio)
- Saturday, January 29 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.  
Jacksonville University  
Delius House open to public
- Saturday, January 29 12.00 noon  
Bus trip with box lunch to Solano Grove and St. Augustine. Tickets  
(\$3.50) should be purchased by Friday, January 28, through College of  
Fine Arts at Jacksonville University. Bus leaves from Jacksonville  
University.
- Sunday, January 30 8.00 p.m.  
Recorded concert of Delius music, Dr. Ralph Andrews program  
commentator. (Radio)
- Tuesday, February 1 9.15 a.m.  
Phyllis Fouraker interviews special Festival guests: Dr. Lionel K.  
Carley, Archivist of the Delius Trust, London, England, Mr. Stewart  
Marville, Archivist of the Percy Grainger Library Society, White  
Plains, N.Y., Mrs. Ella Grainger, widow of Percy Grainger. (Radio)
- Wednesday, February 2 1.00 p.m. to 3.00 p.m., 4.15 p.m. to 5.15 p.m.  
Jacksonville University  
Delius House open to public
- Wednesday, February 2 8.00 p.m.  
Recorded concert of Delius music, Dr. Ralph Andrews program  
commentator. (Radio)
- Thursday, February 3  
Arlington Rotary Club (Arlington Expressway, Holiday Inn)  
"The Composer Frederick Delius" - talk by Jeff Driggers.

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PROGRAMME.

SUNDAY

January twenty-third

JACKSONVILLE ART MUSEUM  
4160 Boulevard Center Drive  
8.00 p.m.  
Lecture - Concert

Jeff Driggers, Lecturer  
Andrea Pettit, Harpist  
Ralph Andrews, Flutist

PROGRAM

Variations on an Old English Tune	Anonymous
Lecture: "The Composer Frederick Delius"	
To Delius With Love: Fantasy on A Summer Garden Theme, for Flute with Harp (or Piano)	William Hoskins

Intermission

Minuet and Scene from Orpheus	Gluck
Piece En Forme De Habanera	Ravel
Minuet from L'Arlésienne	Bizet
Sicilienne	Faure
Entr'act	Ibert

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TUESDAY

January twenty-fifth

JACKSONVILLE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA\*  
Jacksonville Civic Auditorium  
8.30 p.m.

Michael Rabin, Violinist	Willis Page, Conductor.
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PROGRAM

"Daybreak - Dance" from Florida Suite	Delius
Violin Concerto, E Minor	Mendelssohn

Intermission

Symphonie Fantastique	Berlioz
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\* Open to ticket holders only.

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WEDNESDAY

January twenty-sixth

THE WOMAN'S CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
860 Riverside Avenue  
12.30 p.m.  
Lecture - Concert

Lionel K. Carley (Archivist of the Delius Trust, London), Lecturer  
Ellen Frank, Soprano  
Mark Street, Pianist  
Ralph Andrews, Flutist  
Nancy Scott, Pianist

PROGRAM

Lecture: "Tracking Down Delius in Paris and Grez-Sur-Loing"	
Avant que tu ne t'en ailles	Delius
The Nightingale Has a Lyre of Gold	Delius
One More Day, My John	Grainger

THURSDAY

January twenty-seventh

THE FLORIDA JUNIOR COLLEGE AT JACKSONVILLE,  
SOUTH CAMPUS

11901 Beach Boulevard - Main Auditorium

12.15 p.m.

Lecture

Ralph Stang (Concert and oratorio soloist, faculty member College of  
White Plains, N.Y.), Lecturer.

PROGRAM

"Delius: The Solitary Singer -

His Music for Voice and His Choice of Texts"

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SATURDAY

ST. CECILIA MUSIC CLUB January twenty-ninth

Art Center, 22 Marine Street St. Augustine

4.00 p.m.

Concert - Reception

David Middleton, Violinist

Effymae Foster, Pianist

PROGRAM

Sonata for Violin and Piano

Delius

Reception in honor of Dr. Lionel K. Carley (Archivist of the Delius  
Trust, London), Stewart Manville (Archivist of the Percy Grainger  
Library Society, White Plains, N.Y.), and Mrs. Ella Grainger.

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SUNDAY

January thirtieth

UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

7405 Arlington Expressway

Aaron Krosnick, Violinist

Mary Lou Wesley Krosnick, Pianist

Ralph Andrews, Flutist

Rev. Charles McGehee

Program to be announced

CUMMER GALLERY OF ART

829 Riverside Avenue

3.00 p.m.

Ralph Stang, Baritone

Harvey Scholl, Pianist

Jacksonville University

Student String Quartet

(Mark Davidson, Stephanie Hack, Linda Hurd,  
John Moye)

PROGRAM

I

A Reiver's Neck-Verse

Grainger

Words by Algernon Charles Swinburne

II

Willow, Willow

Grainger

From Settings of Songs & Tunes from William Chappell's

Old English Popular Music

The Pretty Maid Milkin' Her Cow

From British Folk-Music Settings

Dafydd Y Garreg Wen (David of the White Rock)

Welsh traditional song

The Hunter and His Career

From Chappell's Old English Popular Music

### III

Et Syn (A Vision), Op. 33a, No.6 Grieg  
 Words by Aa. O. Vinje  
 Ved Rundarne (Return to Rundarne), Op. 33b, No.3  
 Words by Aa. O. Vinje  
 Og Jeg Vil Ha Mig en Hjertenskjaer (And I Should like to Have A  
 Sweetheart), Op. 60, No. 5  
 Words by Vilhelm Krag  
 Eros, Op. 70, No.1  
 Words by Otto Benzon

### IV

Erhebt eure Herzen, Meine Bruder Delius  
 From A Mass Of Life. Text by Nietzsche from  
 Also Sprach Zarathustra

### V

(From Delius' two albums of Norwegian Songs for Nina Grieg)  
 Spillemaend (The Minstrel) Delius  
 Words by Ibsen  
 Venevil  
 Words by Bjornson  
 Ved Rundarne (Return to Rundarne)  
 Words by Aa. O. Vinje  
 Prinsessen  
 Words by Bjornson  
 En Fuglevis (The Birds' Story)  
 Words by Ibsen

### Intermission

### VI

On Wenlock Edge Vaughan Williams  
 Poems drawn from A.E.Housman's A Shropshire Lad  
 On Wenlock Edge  
 From far, from eve and morning  
 Is my team ploughing?  
 Oh, when I was in love with you  
 Bredon Hill  
 Clun

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TUESDAY

February 1st

THE FLORIDA JUNIOR COLLEGE AT JACKSONVILLE

NORTH CAMPUS

4501 Capper Road

10.45 a.m.

Lecture

Joseph G. Brennan (Author and Professor, Philosophy, Barnard College,  
 Columbia University), Lecturer

### PROGRAM

"Delius and Whitman"

WEDNESDAY

February second

JACKSONVILLE UNIVERSITY

Lecture - Concert

Delius House on Campus open 1.00 p.m. to 3.00 p.m., 4.15 p.m. to 5.15. p.m.

Lecture - Concert, Recital Hall, Phillips Fine Arts Building 3.00 p.m.

Reception, Phillips Fine Arts Building 4.00 p.m.

Lionel K. Carley (Archivist of the Delius Trust, London), Lecturer

Joy Kincart, Patricia MacDonald, Pianists

PROGRAM

Spoon River

Grainger

Two Preludes

Delius

Lecture: "Delius Before Beecham: An Account of the Earliest Delius Performances in Germany under Dr. Hans Haym"

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THURSDAY

February third

JUNIOR FRIDAY MUSICALE

Friday Musicale Auditorium - 645 Oak Street

4.00 p.m.

Lecture - Concert

Lionel K. Carley (Archivist of the Delius Trust, London) Lecturer

Stewart Manville (Archivist of the Percy Grainger Library Society, White Plains, N.Y.), Lecturer

Allen Good, Pianist

PROGRAM

Lecture: Delius and Grainger Correspondence (Dr. Carley)

Toccata

Delius

Lecture: Percy Grainger's Work on Behalf of Delius (Mr. Manville)

Introduction of Mrs. Ella Grainger

Country Gardens

Grainger

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FRIDAY

February fourth

FRIDAY MUSICALE

Friday Musicale Auditorium - 645 Oak Street

11.00 a.m.

Aaron Krosnick, Violinist

Walter Steinhaus, Violoncellist

Mary Lou Wesley Krosnick, Pianist

PROGRAM

Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 3

Delius

Introduction of Mrs. Ella Grainger

Trio for Piano, Violin and Violoncello,

No.2, Op.66, C minor

Mendelssohn



FRIDAY

February fourth

DELIUS COMPOSITION AWARD CONCERT  
Jacksonville Civic Auditorium Theatre  
8.30 p.m.

Jacksonville University Orchestra      William McNeiland, Conductor

PROGRAM

"Comrades" from Three Songs 1970-71 Mark Scott, Baritone Brenda Bryant, Pianist	A.J. Noakes
Elegy for Sister Kilian Burge Searing, Pianist	Gerald S. Gelatt
"The Spirit of Air" and "Alone" from April Moon Roberta Merrill, Mezzo-Soprano Brenda Bryant, Pianist	Crafton Harris
Signs of the Times Men's Chorus of Omicron Chi Chapter, Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia Fraternity Joseph McCuen, Conductor	Jerry Skelley
Haiku - A Song Cycle Ellen Frank, Soprano Linda Hurd, Violist Harvey Scholl, Harpsichordist	Marilyn J. Ziffrin
Intermission	
Summer Night On the River Serenade for Strings Icon: Igor Stravinsky On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring Spoon River	Delius Warlock Geoffrey Gibbs Delius Grainger

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'A VILLAGE ROMEO AND JULIET' in Washington.

I am very grateful to Dr. William Randel, to Mr. Edward A. Falasca, Mr. John Coveney, Mr. Richard Foose, Mr. L. Robert Charles and Mr. Michael Manning, all of whom sent newspaper cuttings. The full text of these will be given in this and in the following issues: as in the case of the 'Koanga' reviews they are printed in chronological order. The reviews are preceded by the performance particulars in the Programme:-

OPERA HOUSE/KENNEDY CENTRE

OPERA SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON  
Fifteenth Anniversary Season

Wednesday Evening, April 26, 1972 at 8.00

Friday Evening, April 28, 1972 at 8.00

Sunday Afternoon, April 30, 1972 at 2.00

AMERICAN PREMIERE

A VILLAGE ROMEO AND JULIET

By Frederick Delius

Music drama in six scenes in English

Based on Gottfried Keller's novel

By arrangement with Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.,  
publisher and copyright owner

Manz, a rich farmer . . . . .	William Metcalf
Marti, a rich farmer . . . . .	Will Roy
Sali, son of Manz, as a child . . . . .	Colin Duffy
Vreli, Marti's daughter, as a child . . . . .	June Angela
Sali, as a man . . . . .	John Stewart
Vreli, as a woman . . . . .	Patricia Wells
Dark Fiddler . . . . .	John Reardon
Pastry Woman . . . . .	Monica Ortiz
Wheel of Fortune Woman . . . . .	Janet Kenney
Cheap Jewelry Woman . . . . .	Mary Jane Stephano
Doll and Puppet Man . . . . .	Howard Hensel
Fruit Man . . . . .	Lewis Freeman
Knick-Knack Man . . . . .	David Long
First Woman . . . . .	Yvonne Easter
First Man . . . . .	Glen Cunningham
Second Man . . . . .	Carver Blanchard
Third Woman . . . . .	Sandra Cryder
Second Woman . . . . .	Adriana Amelias
Wild Girl . . . . .	Helga Bullock
Stoned Girl . . . . .	Mary Jane Stephano
Poor Horn Player . . . . .	Howard Hensel
Hunchbacked Bass Fiddle Player . . . . .	Monte Jaffe
First Barge Man . . . . .	William Metcalf
Second Barge Man . . . . .	Lewis Freeman
Third Barge Man . . . . .	Robert Williamson

Conducted by Paul Callaway

Scenery, Films and Projections by  
Ronald Chase

Directed by Frank Corsaro

Costumes designed by Theoni V. Aldredge

Production conceived by

Frank Corsaro and Ronald Chase Lighting by Nananne Porcher

The Washington Post. Thursday, April 27th, 1972.

'A Village Romeo and Juliet' by Paul Hume.

Everything you may have dreamed of in an ideal opera performance seems wrapped up in the Opera Society's newest venture, "A Village Romeo and Juliet", by Frederick Delius.

Given the first of three performances last night in the Kennedy Center Opera House, the fragrant score comes all wrapped in half-lights for a fated couple of teen-agers whose families' feuds make it impossible for them to live their love except in a dream world.

As Paul Callaway conducted a score of exquisite, extraordinary beauty, even the orchestra pit of the Opera House was covered with a fine scrim to sustain every bit of illusion for those in the theatre.

As in last year's "Koanga", the Society's first venture into Delius, Frank Corsaro is again the stage director, making brilliant use of slides and projections by Ronald Chase, and with sensitively devised lighting by Nananne Porcher.

To sing Delius demands a special breed of vocal artist. The Opera Society has done superbly in gathering together John Reardon as the Dark Fiddler, Patricia Wells and John Stewart as the lovers with an impossible dream. They have also put some highly talented singers, with fine enunciation of the English text, into many lesser roles.

Already opera companies in St. Paul and Seattle have announced plans for including this "Romeo and Juliet" in their immediate futures. Capped by radiant music, it is a magical opera, beautifully realized in the Society's production. A full review of the performance will appear in all editions of Friday's Washington Post.

The Washington Daily News (City Edition) Thursday, April 27th, 1972.

'Village Romeo' disappointing by Nina Hyde.

Washington opera lovers, spoiled by two extraordinary opera performances already this season at the Kennedy Center, Ariodante and Beatri Cenci, were let down last night by the presentation of A Village Romeo and Juliet, the American premier of the Frederick Delius opera.

It was no fault of the cast, and not so much that of the overall production, but the much touted opera itself leaves a great deal to be desired.

Is it an opera really? Or is it a tone poem set to music, or symphonic work with the introduction of soloist and chorus?

Surely the story is opera material. It is based on the Swiss writer Gottfried Keller's story of life in the Swiss countryside which he based on a newspaper article that appeared in his lifetime. Keller's retelling the story of two lovers, Gali and Vreneli, is a touching and dramatic tale of the two

whose friendships and passion builds as their respective fathers hatred of each other develops. The opera ends as Sali pulls the plug on the barge the lovers have boarded to sail off together and the barge sinks.

Keller wrote the original libretto in German. Delius translated the libretto his own way and actually wrote the opera around his own English text.

John Stewart and Patricia Wells performed their roles as Sali and Vreli with great charm and also lovely voices. John Reardon, as the Dark Fiddler, was perhaps the strongest of the three leads.

The entire production takes place behind a see-thru scrim and in front of a screen. There are often two different picture ideas being played on the two different screens with a contrapuntal feeling that is often very effective. I felt frustrated with the scrim between me and the performance. I never really felt the close contact that I enjoy with the cast.

A Village and Romeo and Juliet will be performed at the Kennedy Center tomorrow evening and Sunday afternoon.

The Evening Bulletin, Philadelphia, Penn. Thursday, April 27th, 1972.

Delius Opera has U.S. Premiere  
by Max de Schauensee - Bulletin Music Critic Emeritus

WASHINGTON - "A Village Romeo and Juliet", Frederick Delius' best and most famous of his five operas, was presented last night for the first time in America by the Opera Society of Washington at Kennedy Center.

The opera which was first given in Berlin in 1907, has had few revivals since that day. Oddly enough and despite this, its fame has been maintained and last night this fame drew people of the musical world from far and wide.

Cecil Grey has said that "A Village Romeo" is "A symphonic poem with the implicit program made explicit upon the stage." Explicit is hardly the proper word for last night's performance, so masterfully stage-directed by Frank Corsaro.

Ronald Chase's projections and Nananne Porcher's lighting kept us in a world of shadows surrounded by the more evanescent facts of nature: its glinting waters, its field of poppies, its grasses stirred by the wind, its sky at dawn and twilight and its leaves - countless tapestries of leaves.

It is impossible, after last night, to accept this particular opera in a naturalistic approach. Mr. Chase's poetic evocations, such as the walk to the Paradise Garden, are ideally wedded to Delius' late romantic style, its impressionism and its poetry.

I am a Delius enthusiast, but I was amazed at his sustaining power in this opera - a power unsuspected in his shorter pieces. There is a continuous flow, a web of sounds that seizes the mind and the emotions.

The effects obtained by Corsaro and Chase were not unlike those so recently applauded in "Tristan" and "Pelleas" at the Metropolitan last season. A scrim added in giving the whole thing another dimension, a further escape from reality.

Musically, the evening was all one could ask for. Paul Callaway, Washington's faithful and talented conductor, emphasized the frequent strength of the music.

Patricia Wells and John Stewart sang beautifully as the lovers, Sali and Vreli, who like Romeo and Juliet, Tristan and His Isolde, and Pelleas and Melisande, are unable to exist in the world that surrounds them. Mr. Stewart and Miss Wells looked really young and appealing.

To that stalwart, John Reardon, fell a fascinating role of the Dark Fiddler. He sang with power and resourcefulness and his acting is always marked by distinction. William Metcalf and Will Roy were excellent as the two fathers who are also belligerent farmers, and the big cast was filled out with talented local singers. The English text could only be heard in spots. When will people begin to realize that singing in English does not ensure even frequent intelligibility?

Music in this country owes much to this enterprising Washington company for making it possible to hear such a poetically distinctive work presented in superlative fashion.

The Evening Star, Washington. Thursday, April 27th, 1972.

Romeo: Weak Score with 3 Fine Singers  
by Irving Lowens.

"A Village Romeo and Juliet," the opera generally considered the best of the six composed by Frederick Delius, finally made it across the Atlantic a little more than 65 years after it was first seen in Berlin.

Thanks to the Opera Society of Washington, the American premiere of the piece took place last night in the Kennedy Center.

DESPITE the large cast, "A Village Romeo" is really a three-character opera, and the three principal parts were brilliantly cast and beautifully sung by Patricia Wells (Vreli, the "Village Juliet,") John Stewart (Sali, the "Village Romeo") and John Reardon (the "Dark Fiddler," a mysterious, ambivalent character with no equivalent in the Romeo and Juliet tale).

The remainder of the singing ranged from excellent to barely passable.

Not surprisingly, the same production techniques which gave the Opera Society a surprise smash hit in last season's "Koanga" were used in "A Village Romeo." These largely do away with orthodox scenery, for which a potpourri of moving pictures and still shots projected on a double scrim (with the cast functioning between the two scrims) is substituted. Props, too, are kept at a minimum.

For these techniques, Ronald Chase is largely responsible; they may be an important milestone in the history of opera as an art-form. They are capable of generating extraordinarily beautiful effects and strong poetic images, and these were not infrequently to be found in "A Village Romeo".

But the Chase techniques are not without certain inherent limitations, and these were, to my mind, particularly evident in this production.

In a stimulating program note, director Frank Corsaro boldly hails the opera as "a genuine masterwork," an opinion he shares with other Delius enthusiasts. I'm afraid the music in the piece does not sustain the claim. Of course, it has its lovely moments, but for the most part, the score is pale pastel. It kept reminding me of the paintings of Juvénat de Chavannes.

It is ironic (and very illuminating) that far and away the finest music heard yesterday was the famous "Walk to the Paradise Garden." It was used in this production as an interlude between the last two scenes with stunning effect. Here is, quite truly, "a genuine masterwork".

The trouble is that the "Walk" is not part of "A Village Romeo" - Delius wrote it some five years after he completed the opera. He used themes from the opera, but wove them into a completely new tapestry of sound, much in the same way that Wagner used themes from the Ring for his "Siegfried Idyll".

Delius's instinct was sound, I think. He distilled the essence of the opera into one brief, gloriously intense, wordless tone poem. The rest of "A Village Romeo" does not breathe the same exalted air.

PERHAPS the most serious limitation of the double scrim is its tendency to force opera, essentially a ~~three~~-dimensionally form, into a two-dimensional straitjacket.

In a curious reversal of roles, opera strives to attain a cinematic state. Living characters move like images on a movie screen - I had to keep reminding myself yesterday that the singers on the stage were flesh-and-blood human beings and not merely shadows.

Somehow, the lack of depth and breadth cools down the inherent emotionalism of the lyric stage. I found no tears in my eyes as I watched the two impassioned lovers whose trials make up the plot of this opera.

Perhaps some of the trouble was a certain clumsiness in the manner in which the techniques were used. At times, back scrim projections clashed with front scrim projections; images moving on the scrims in different directions caused me a certain amount of vertigo and discomfort; triple and quadruple superimposition of images was confusing.

BUT MORE of the trouble, I am convinced, was caused by the general flabbiness of the Delius score and libretto.

I agree with Delius biographer Arthur Hutchings, who wrote of the celebrated dream sequence in which Sali and Vroli imagine themselves about to be married in a Swiss village church: "The bells ring and the organ plays, very glutinously

and nastily, and the hymn sung by the villagers if one of the most sentimental pieces of pious balderdash, grand Amen and all, that ever took its revenge upon a man who had sneers handy for church composers". And the scene at the fair isn't on a much higher artistic level.

The orchestra under Paul Callaway played well and the pacing was natural; Theoni V. Aldredge's costumes were handsome; Nananne Porcher's lighting was (as ever) subtle and satisfying; Frank Corsaro's direction was capable.

"A Village Romeo" is repeated at 8 p.m. tomorrow and at 2 p.m. on Sunday.

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(To be continued in the next issue.)

